The Democratic Deficit and School-based Management in Australia

Abstract

Purpose
The theory of the democratic deficit is applied to school-based management with an emphasis on Australia. This theory was developed to examine managerial restructuring of the Australian Public Service in the 1990s. Given similarities between the use of managerial practices in the public service and government schools, we draw on recent literature about school-based management in Australia and apply the democratic deficit theory to it.

Design
This paper is conceptual in focus. We analyse literature in terms of the three components of the democratic deficit—the weakening of accountability, the denial of the roles and values of public employees, and the emergence of a 'hollow state' (Rhodes, 1994) — and in relation to the application of this theory to the Australian Public Service.

Findings
A trend towards the three components of the democratic deficit is evident in Australia although, to date, its emergence has not been as extensive as in the United Kingdom. We argue that the democratic principles on which public schooling in Australia was founded are being eroded by managerial and market practices.

Practical implications
These findings provide policy makers and practitioners with another way of examining managerial and market understandings of school-based management and its impact on teachers and on students. It offers suggestions to reorient practices away from those that are exclusively managerial based towards those that are public sector based.

Originality/value
The value of this paper is that it applies the theory of the democratic deficit to current understandings of school-based management.

Classification
Research paper

Keywords: democratic deficit, accountability, school-based management

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Introduction

Throughout the world the public sector is in crisis. A significant aspect of this crisis is a failure, or potential failure, to deliver social outcomes and the de-professionalisation of public employees. It is heightened by the privatisation of public goods and services, and the redefinition of citizens as customers. In schools, managerial-inspired policies impose greater contractual accountability on principals, at the expense of professional and moral accountabilities. In this paper, we are not denying that there are multiple forms of accountability and that different types of accountability are appropriate in certain situations (Jones, 1992; Martin, 1997; Mulgan, 2000a, 2000b; Pillay and Kimber, 2009; Uhr, 1999). Our argument is that contractual accountability driven by the market is problematic for public activities such as schooling.[1] The reason is that it can de-professionalise teachers through a performance focus, and attempts to impose market relationships on public schools through a stress on parental (customer) choice of schools, ignoring that that choice is limited by complex factors including parental income.

Australia in the 1990s and 2000s has seen the appearance of a 'democratic deficit' (Kimber and Maddox, 2003; Costello in Preston, 1998) in the public service. This deficit highlights the weakening of professional accountability, the ignoring of the roles and values of public employees, and the emergence of a 'hollow state' (Rhodes, 1994). The hollow state has been described as the removal of public goods and services from the public sector and the reduction of citizens to customers or clients

[1] See Alford, 1993; Harden, 1992; Pollitt, 1988; Rhodes, 1994; Ranson and Stewart, 1994; and Thynne, 1994 for a discussion of public goods.

(Rhodes, 1994). In this paper, we argue that we are witnessing the development of this deficit in the schooling system, and its emergence is in part a consequence of the current managerial and market understanding of school-based management. We contend that contractual accountability, referred to as 'the degree to which [actors] … are fulfilling their expectations of particular audiences in terms of standards, outcomes and results' (Mulford *et al.*, 2008, p. 20) might be strengthened but professional and moral accountability are being weakened. It is argued that the focus on contractual accountability and performance is de-professionalising teachers and has the potential to reduce outcomes for students. The marketisation — or privatisation — of schools is at the expense of those who are unable to pay, privatising public education and conflicting with the notions of the school system as free, compulsory and secular.

In this article first we consider the democratic deficit in the public service and then apply this theory to schools. While the situation in Australia might not be as grave as in the United Kingdom, the recent launching of the federal government's MySchools website that provides school results on national literacy and numeracy tests, and compares these results with statistically similar schools (thus establishing League Tables) represent the onward march of the democratic deficit. This discussion emphasises the public values of democratic citizenship such as community, deliberative discussion, inclusion, and social justice rather than the values of the market such as the individual, customers, exclusion, and performance.

The Democratic Deficit

The theory of the democratic deficit was developed as a response to the argument posited by those advocating managerial restructuring of the public sector. Briefly, the proponents of the managerial position argue that the use of private sector management practices within the public service will: strengthen accountability; improve efficiency by developing a performance focus; and clarify accountability lines, thus inculcating a customer focus. Together, these practices are believed to enhance democratic government (e.g., Kimber, 1999, 2000; Kimber and Maddox, 2003).

Managerialism, which is also termed corporate managerialism, New Public Management, and economic rationalism, was introduced into the public sector in many countries following the Oil Shock of the 1970s. Simply, managerialism entails the introduction of private sector practices into the public sector and the removal of public goods and services to the private sector.

Proponents of managerialism bring together the neo-classical economic theories of public choice theory, agency theory, and transaction cost analysis with the management theory, New Public Management.[2] Beliefs in individualism and in the free market are central to proponents of these theories. These ideas can be thought of as having been built on a particular reading of the work of Adam Smith[3], and on the work of the utilitarians, James Mill and Jeremy Bentham (Borins, 1988; Boston, 1991; Dietrich, 1994; Dinwiddy, 1989; Dunleavy, 1991; Ferlie, *et al.*, 1996; Groenewegen, 1996; Head and Bell, 1994; Holmes and Shand, 1995; Hood, 1991;

[2] It has been argued that the British television series, *Yes Minister*, is based on public choice theory (Borins, 1988; Wettenhall, 1997, p. 238).

[3] It can be argued that this neo-classical economic understanding of Smith ignores the spirit of beneficence in his work.

Kettl, 1993; McMaster and Sawkins, 1996; Mueller, 1984[1976]: Orchard, 1989; Pollitt, 1993; PUMA, 1993; Pusey, 1991; Reglar, 1999; Savoie, 1995; Self, 1990, 1993; Shafritz and Hyde, 1987; Stretton and Orchard, 1994; Trebilcock, 1995; Worsham *et al.*, 1997; Williamson, 1996, Waldo, 1984). Writers such as James Buchanan (1984 [1979]) and former head of the Australian Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Michael Keating (1989, 1990) have been some of the proponents of these theories. While managerial practices might have increased efficiency and highlighted the importance of contractual accountability, in Government Business Enterprises for instance, when introduced into core public services often they have been at the expense of competing values such as equity and effectiveness. Our key concern in this article, then, is the erosion of democratic principles in public education by managerial and market forces.

This erosion can be viewed through 'three paradoxical results of managerial restructuring' that have been observed in Westminster-type democracies (Kimber and Maddox, 2003, p. 62). Westminster-type democracies such as those operating in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, are systems of representative and responsible parliamentary government. The first of these results is that, rather than strengthening accountability, the use of managerial practices weakens it (Considine, 1988, 1990, 1996; Gregory, 1999; Kelsey, 1993, 1995; Kimber and Maddox, 2003; Maor, 1999; Mascarenhas, 1993). The second is that, when they have been used inappropriately, private sector performance practices have led to 'the denial of time-honoured roles and values of the public service arising from an inappropriate use of private sector performance practices' (Kimber and Maddox, 2003, p. 62). Third, rather than clarifying accountability lines and serving citizens better, some

writers have observed the emergence of a ‘hollow state’ (Rhodes, 1994) where public goods and services have been removed from the public sector, and citizens have been redefined as customers or clients (e.g., Ferlie *et al.*, 1996; Pierre, 1995; Seidle, 1995). ‘Together, these three outcomes can be described as the democratic deficit position’ (Kimber and Maddox, 2003, p. 62). Each of these components is now discussed.

The weakening of accountability

For those advancing the democratic deficit position, accountability is weakened as a consequence of managerialists’ denial of the political nature of public management. By seeking to establish a strict separation between politics and administration, proponents of the managerial perspective misconstrue the fact that ‘the concept of ministerial responsibility in Westminster-type governments renders any redefinition of that relationship increasingly difficult’ (Mascarenhas, 1993, p. 322), a point suggested more recently by Mulgan (2006). The effects of seeking to separate politics from administration in systems of representative and responsible parliamentary government are contradictory (Kimber and Maddox, 2003). By emphasising generic management skills, managers gain in power over elected ministers thus diminishing ministerial responsibility, especially as ‘ministers are elected for their political rather than their managerial capabilities’ (Kimber and Maddox, 2003, p. 62). It is likely that, as generic managers have minimal substantive knowledge of their department, their advice is not based on those substantive departmental functions (Considine, 1988, pp. 9-11, 15-16; 1996, pp. 29-50).

While seeking to increase the power of generic managers, the political executive has been reinforcing what can be thought of as ‘the central tenet of responsible government, namely that public servants are accountable to their ministers’ (Kimber

and Maddox, 2003, p. 62) by altering the employment and promotion process. Governments have, for instance, introduced senior executive services, placed department heads on fixed-term contracts, and made greater use of ministerial offices. These actions have made 'the position of senior officers personally dependent on the favour of ministers' potentially compromising the very 'conditions that enable public servants to provide ministers with impartial advice in a "frank and fearless" manner' (Kimber and Maddox 2003, p. 62). Referring to the process of 'ministerialisation' in the schooling system in Australia, McInerney (2003, pp. 63-65) paints a picture similar to that drawn by the heads of government departments and critics of managerial restructuring of the way in which managerial practices have increased politicisation and engendered a 'climate of fear' within the public service (Ehrich *et al*., 2004; Kimber, 2004; Kimber and Maddox, 2003).

Denial of the roles and values of the public service

It could be argued that, from the perspective of those promoting managerial solutions, 'Reward (and discipline) measures such as performance pay and efficiency reviews are held to engender business-style responses on the part of individual public servants' (Kimber and Maddox, 2003, p. 62). For these people, the private sector is more efficient. By contrast, from the point of view of those advocating the democratic deficit position, some activities can be performed more efficiently in the private sector but others are performed more efficiently in the public sector. While the use of private sector practices might increase efficiency when they are used in Government Business Enterprises, for instance, when measures such as performance indicators and performance pay are used in the public service then the essentially political nature of the public service can be denied. Much of the activity in which public servants are

engaged is qualitative rather than quantitative in nature. Thus it cannot be easily measured (e.g., Kettl, 1995; Mashaw, 1996; Self, 1977[1972]).

From the democratic deficit perspective, those promoting the managerial argument ignore that public servants are often motivated by factors other than higher pay. Indeed, public servants often cite public duty as a key motivating factor in their work (Kimber, 2000; Ranson and Stewart, 1994; Wettenhall, 1994). For many public servants, if they are to advise ministers in a 'frank and fearless' manner, they must perform their duties in the public interest and they must act ethically. As stated in the *Principles of Good Practice* (2008) released by the Institute of Public Administration Australia (Queensland Division), 'values and ethics are important in establishing the ethos of the public sector and in effectively delivery services to the public'. These ethical values include integrity, fairness, and respect (IPAA, 2008).

The rise of the hollow state

When we think about the work of public servants we think about their serving citizens through the provision of public goods and services like health, education, and infrastructure. Proponents of managerial restructuring assert that separating policy formulation from service delivery and calling citizens customers will clarify accountability lines and will inculcate a customer focus, thus enhancing service. Yet, by separating policy formulation from service delivery, proponents of managerialism can remove public goods and services through methods such as contracting out and privatisation. They can redefine citizens as customers or clients, thus reducing citizen voice and attempting to replace it with a market relationship between buyers and sellers. The result is a 'hollow state' (e.g., Rhodes, 1994). Rather than being clarified,

accountability lines can be blurred in the resulting network of contracts. Customer exit from the market does not equate with the rights and responsibilities of citizenship (Hirschmann, 1970). In generating a hollow state, managerialists attempt to take the political out of the public sector, ignoring the distinctiveness of public administration in the process (Kimber, 2000).

The Australian Public Service, Managerial Restructuring and the Democratic Deficit

Kimber and Maddox (2003) and Kimber (1999,2000) have explored many of the changes to the Australian Public Service during the period of the Keating Labor Government (1991-1996) in Australia through the lens of the democratic deficit. These initiatives included the formalisation of contract employment for the heads of public service departments and increased use of ministerial staff raising the spectre of politicisation of the public service, the use of performance indicators and performance pay for senior staff in areas where public service activity is qualitative rather than quantitative; and the contracting-out of public goods and services, as well as the terming of citizens as customers and clients. While there was a move towards each component of the democratic deficit, it was moderated by an adherence to the principles of representative and responsible parliamentary government (Kimber, 2000).

The more ideologically committed a government is to managerial practices the more marked the democratic deficit will be (e.g., Kimber and Maddox, 2003). It has been argued that, under the Howard Government, politicisation of the public service increased, as exemplified by the Children Overboard Affair and the allegations of whistleblower, Andrew Wilkie. During this time, public goods like Telstra were

privatised. Some commentators have observed that the Rudd Government has, to some extent, pulled back from the ideological commitment of its predecessor.

School-based management

During the 1980s, schools, as public sector organisations, became targets of reform processes by governments in an attempt to make them more efficient and effective (Dudley and Vidovich, 1995). These changes targeted the management of education and a previously centralised system was restructured so that schools evolved into self managing units (Beare and Sturman, 1991). The model introduced became known as 'site-based decision-making', 'school-centred forms of education', 'local school management', 'school-based management' (McInerney, 2003, p. 57) and 'devolution of responsibility' (Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1973)

School-based management has come to mean different things in different countries and even different states and territories in Australia. As Lingard, Hayes and Mills (2000) remind us, school-based management has no 'essential meaning' but needs to be understood within a particular timeframe and a particular politics. Yet a key assumption on which it is based is that consistent and significant delegation is allocated to the school level of authority to make decisions within a broader framework of government guidelines and policies (Caldwell and Spinks, 1992).

Various studies have sought to examine the scope and impact of school-based management around the world (e.g., Caldwell, 2008, 2006; Cranston *et al.*, 2003; De Grauwe, 2004; Gammage, 2008; World Bank, 2007; Watson, 2004). While some studies have focused on school leaders' perceptions of changes under school-based

management (see Caldwell 2008; Cranston *et al*., 2003; Blackmore, 2004), others have sought to determine if any links can be made between school-based management and improved school outcomes. Regarding the former, Caldwell (2008) refers to the findings of several surveys on the principalship that demonstrate principals' preferences to work in a self-managing school rather than under a more centralised system. The research of Cranston *et al.* (2003) illustrates Caldwell's point. The authors found that over 80% of Australian and New Zealand secondary principals were satisfied with their role under school-based management, despite the fact that pressure in the role and hours worked per week had intensified.

Because different approaches to school-based management have been adopted by different states and territories in Australia, and by different countries since the 1970s, it becomes problematic to consider the impact on student outcomes. Although stating that school-based management is changing, Caldwell (2008), a key proponent of school-based management, holds up Finland (a social democracy) as an example of successful school-based management. Many commentators would argue that the social democratic version of school-based management brought positive changes to schooling in Australia (e.g., McInerney, 2003). Yet it is not the social democratic version of school-based management that is at issue here. It is the managerial and market versions that are.

De Grauwe (2004) observes that multiple and complex pre-conditions and systems are required for school-based management to work. While acknowledging that Finland is a country in which school-based management has been successful, De Grauwe (2004) reminds us that there are differences between developed and developing countries,

that there has been a negative impact on principals (including a reduction in the number of women in such positions), and that there is no conclusive evidence that school-based management has had a positive impact on teaching and learning. Watson (2004), who has provided a positive report on school-based management in the Australian Capital Territory, concludes that there is no evidence that school-based management has been beneficial to Australian Capital Territory students.

Similarly, a World Bank (2007) study of school-based management across the globe, found that there were few 'rigorous studies of the impact of' school-based management and 'those studies that had access to standardized test scores present mixed evidence about the impact of SBM' (World Bank, 2007). In an analysis of 76 empirical studies, Leithwood and Menzies (1998, p. 235) concluded that 'The little evidence that does exist [about school-based management] suggests that effects on students are just as likely to be negative as positive'. In summary, there is no concrete evidence to support the contribution of school-based management towards improved student outcomes and, in its current managerial iteration, school-based management is highly contested and its advantages are yet to be realised.

Of concern in this paper is the particular version of school-based management that is currently being embraced in Westminster-type democracies such as Australia. Rizvi (1994) contrasts the 'social democratic view of devolution' or school-based management that was identified in the policy discourse in the 1970s under Australia's Commonwealth Schools Commission (1973) with the 'corporate managerialist' view of school-based management evident in the 1980s and beyond. According to Rizvi (1994), the corporate managerialist view uses the rhetoric of a socially democratic

view of school-based management but affords schools and their communities only an instrumental say over decisions. Hence, this view steers schools towards centrally dictated goals by tightening accountability measures (Rizvi, 1994). This outcome exemplifies one of the paradoxical results of managerialism identified by Considine (1988) more than two decades ago.

In its current iteration in Australia, then, school-based management is based on similar managerial principles as those evident in the restructured public sector emphasising outputs, performance, and other efficiencies (e.g., Dempster *et al.*, 2001; Lingard *et al.*, 2002; McInerney, 2003). Thus it is contended in this paper that the lens provided by the democratic deficit can be used to interpret key features of school-based management as it is currently implemented in Australia.

The concerns raised by researchers such as Dempster (2000), McInerney (2003), and Blackmore (2004) are similar to those raised by those critical of managerial restructuring of the public service referred to earlier (e.g., Considine, 1988, 1990; Gregory, 1999; Kelsey, 1993, 1995; Kimber and Maddox, 2003; Maor, 1999; Macarenhas, 1993; Ranson and Stewart, 1994; Rhodes, 1994; Wettenhall, 1994). These concerns relate to the domination of the contractual accountability regime to the detriment of other forms of accountability such as professional and moral accountability (Ehrich, 2000). The danger here is that:

> contractual accountability denies the human and responsive dimensions of leadership [unlike professional and moral accountability that] centre around relationships between people; relationship built on trust and support, not relationships that are characterised by control and hierarchy (Ehrich, 2000, p. 121).

While we concur with Mulford *et al*. (2008) that some form of contractual accountability in schooling is important, a heavy reliance on testing, performativity, and other forms of centralised control may not lead necessarily to improving educational outcomes or more importantly, the life chances of all children.

It could be argued that, just as public servants see the value of the principles of representative and responsible parliamentary government ensuring that they provide ministers with impartial and expert advice and that they serve the public good, so too do teachers and school leaders attach significance to notions of professional accountability (Ehrich, 2000). These notions of accountability and the public good run counter to the emphasis on a narrow understanding of contractual accountability in the current managerial context in which solutions based on neo-liberal economic theories and the New Public Management predominate (Kimber, 2001).

Blackmore (2004, p. 368) summarises this context when she says, ‘neo-liberal market individualism and strategies of marketisation, devolution, choice and privatization of education provision also came to be the dominant paradigm of global education policy communities of the OECD during the 1990s’. These changes can be viewed as marking a move away from the view that public funding of education is for the common good, and reinforces the notion of the increasing commodification of education.

Weakening accountability

As much as the use of managerial practices in the public sector generated new and competing forms of accountabilities, so too has the use of these practices in schools

(e.g., Burke, 1997; Ehrich, 2000). Like the democratic critics of New Public Management, those critical of school-based management:

> argue that the values underpinning managerialism and school-based management are opposed to the traditional understanding of education as a public good. These writers maintain that the focus on management arising from economic rationalist/ managerialist thinking is inconsistent with the professional and personal values of school leaders and can contradict important ethics of care and justice. When contractual accountability, that is accountability to the government or system, is strong and competes against moral and professional accountabilities … a skilful administrator needs to optimise his or her most valued beliefs, responsibilities and obligations in ways that minimise adverse consequences (Cranston *et al.,* 2003, pp. 136-137).

Such adverse consequences include the downplaying of equity and social justice, and the promotion of power and status (e.g., Blackmore, 2004; Blackmore and Sachs, 2007; Preston and Samford, 2002). For instance, in a study that explored the experiences of 150 women leaders in schools, universities, and further education colleges regarding their work within an increasingly corporatised system, Blackmore and Sachs (2007) found that the women leaders struggled between their 'passion for education' and social justice, and the desire to perform effectively according to a range of external measurements:

> inwardly many [women leaders] perceived the performative aspects of reform as subverting not improving student learning, staff well-being and more equitable outcomes. Outwardly, they maintained appearances by being in a constant state of improvement and performativity as their personal (and institutional) survival depended on such performances (Blackmore and Sachs, 2007, p. 247).

Given the ongoing marketisation and managerialism inherent in education, the authors question whether the current context will allow women managers the space to undertake the democratic work needed 'to moderate the worst aspects of the reform imperatives' (Blackmore and Sachs, 2007, p. 262).

In her earlier work where she analysed restructuring of the school system in Victoria, Blackmore (2004) observed that issues of gender and power have been marginalised due to work intensification and the stress on the role of principals as managers. These twin factors have enhanced the power of male principals, discouraged women from taking on the principalship, and placed 'feminist principals' in a situation of conflict between their beliefs and the system requirements (Blackmore, 2004. Also see McInerney, 2003).

By devolving more management functions to school principals, those promoting managerial practices in schools accord greater weight to generic management skills than they do to substantive knowledge of educational leadership. This stress on generic management skills has been redefining the role of principals in 'instrumental ways in line with their role as business managers, rather than as educational leaders' (McInerney, 2003, p. 66), a point also highlighted by Dempster (2000), Blackmore (2004) and Ball (2009). These 'generic concepts … at the organisational level have no specificity to education or schools' (Ball, 2009, p. 87). The stress on private sector business factors has been de-professionalising school leaders (e.g., Hargreaves, 2000). The principals and teachers interviewed by Blackmore (2004) often returned to their feeling that their professionalism was being undermined (also see McInerney 2003).

What these outcomes suggest is that the proponents of school-based management have, in effect, sought to strengthen principals' and teachers' contractual accountability to governments (Ehrich, 2000). Yet they have also weakened the professional and moral accountability (Ehrich, 2000) that principals have to their teacher colleagues and to their students. These accountabilities hinge on the ethics of

care, of critique, and of justice (Starratt, 1996), and on the professionalism of teachers. The next part of the discussion considers some of the problematic aspects of contractual accountability for teachers' roles and work.

Denial of the roles and values of teachers

It is not in dispute that, in Australia, 'over the past forty years, school-based management has brought benefits to school systems in terms of decreasing the highly structured and rigid nature of education' (McInerney, 2003, p. 69). For example, proponents have identified advantages as greater contractual accountability of schools; the ability of schools to make decisions about resources; and the ability to draw on the professional capacities of staff (Leithwood and Menzies, 1998). However, as noted early, in its current managerial iteration, school-based management is contested and its advantages are yet to be realised.

Central to this second dimension of the democratic deficit is a performance focus to the detriment of the traditional roles and values of public servants — or, in this case, teachers and school leaders. Hargreaves (2000) argues that we are in an age of de-professionalism that has been driven by globalisation, technology and the need for international competitiveness. The performance focus of this era is evident in the stress on 'returning teachers to the hands-on intuitive, learn-as-you-go approach of the pre-professional age or by subjecting them to the detailed measurement and control of narrowly conceived competence frameworks; or both' (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 167). It is evident in centralised curricula and testing regimes that reduce the autonomy of classroom teachers and contain a 'market-inspired application from the corporate sector, of systems of administration by performance management (through targets,

standards, and paper trails of monitoring and accountability)' (Hargreaves, 2000, pp. 168-169).

A key aspect of the performance focus is performance pay. Performance pay is based on the public choice theory assumption that workers are motivated by higher pay (e.g., Buchanan, 1984 [1979]; Orchard, 1989; Self, 1990, 1993; Stretton and Orchard, 1994). As noted above, it was argued by those introducing managerial reform into the public service that public servants were motivated by higher pay. Yet it was found by those critical of the changes that many public servants were motivated by serving the public and not by higher pay.

In Australia during the period of the Keating Government the implementation of performance pay in the Australian Public Service failed because it caused angst and because senior public servants refused to accept private sector performance practices as central to greater efficiency, accountability, and democracy. They viewed the public service as a unified career service, with roles and values such as sense of duty that were distinct from those of the private sector (Kimber, 2000; Halligan, 1997, 1994).

During the final years of the Howard Government, there was discussion about implementing a performance pay scheme for teachers (e.g., Ingvarson *et al.,* 2007). Similar criticisms to performance pay for public servants can be mounted against performance pay for teachers, particularly in relation to professionalism. Ingvarson *et al*. (2007) argued that any performance pay scheme needs to be devised jointly by the government, professional associations and employer organisations. Teachers needed

to develop the standards by which teachers' knowledge and skills would be assessed. They proposed a national trial scheme involving primary school teachers, and secondary mathematics and science teachers.

While all stakeholders argue that teachers should be appropriately remunerated and are currently underpaid, there is disagreement over performance pay. The call for performance pay has been supported by the Business Council of Australia and the Australian Industry Group (Milburn, 2007) but regarded with suspicion by unions (Milburn, 2007). The Australian Council of Trade Unions president, Sharon Burrow, has described performance pay as an 'insult to the teaching profession' as it 'would demoralise teachers by pitting them against one another' (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2007). Some teachers would be disadvantaged as the need 'to balance the books' implied that 'some teachers would not get their annual increment leaving them worse off than under the current pay structure' (Australian Education Union, Victoria, 2007, http://www.aeuvic.asn.au/campaigns/federal_public_education/news/1179374173_20845.html).

The then Australian Education Union federal president, Pat Byrne (http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Media/MediaReleases/2007/1206.pdf), observed that '"Performance pay has failed everywhere it has been tried overseas and even the Minister's own research found it would not work and points out the pitfalls associated with linking pay to student results"'.[4] Importantly, the judging of teachers via their students' results indicates that the systems' advocates ignore the socio-economic

[4] For instance, performance pay was trialled in the United States in the early 1990s.

backgrounds of students (Martin, 2007). While the performance pay scheme in the Australian Public Service failed in its implementation, the performance pay scheme for teachers did not even reach the implementation stage. It was not only rejected by State and Territory ministers (April 2007) because it interfered in their responsibilities for schooling but was unable to be funded by the Commonwealth (Australian Education Union, Victoria, 2007).

As the performance focus in public schooling in Australia has intensified, it has been reported that the altered role of principals, the changes to teaching jobs and the attack on teachers' unions, it has been reported that some teachers have come to feel so devalued that they have been considering whether they wish to remain in the profession (e.g., Blackmore, 2004). Thus teachers and principals, like public servants, are motivated by many goals including professionalism and service — and not purely by personal financial gain.

Questions of schools, teachers, and performance management have been addressed in the United Kingdom. Gleeson and Husbands (2003), for instance, appear to argue that performance management does not improve the quality of teaching as it is counter-productive. They link questions about professionalism and pedagogy to modernism. Gleeson and Husbands (2003, p. 500) argue 'that modernization is not primarily or necessarily concerned with education improvement, but with the changing conditions of performance in which professionality and pedagogy occur'.

Connecting with Hargreaves' (2000) observations noted earlier, market and managerial reformers have sought to alter 'professional and managerial cultures away

from public policy narratives, to those based on private market principles' (Gleeson and Husbands, 2003, p. 501). Through the use of performance management, appraisal, target setting, standards, and funding reformers have 'constrained the identities, responsibilities, and working conditions of professionals in public sector' (Gleeson and Husbands, 2003, p. 501). The use of private sector performance practices and working conditions via deregulation, contracting out and 'the indirect privatisation of the public sector' are seen to undermine 'values in the public domain' (Gleeson and Husbands, 2003, p. 502).

The focus shifts from the citizen to the individual in this market system. Individuals are expected to invest more in their education and performance. The concerns of the education system could be seen as moving from the welfare of citizens to:

> enhancing positional status. This shift has changed the relationship between individual and society in the way rights, duties, and responsibilities have become more and more contractually mediated through education. Performativity ensures that both the conditions of the market and the terms of its compliance are adhered to, in formal and in tacit ways. … Increasingly, what counts as an educated person us being normalised by tests and measures of social order (skill, outcome, and targets) which have only a tenuous grip on citizenship, morality, and employability despite expressed concerns for the latter. … (Gleeson and Husbands, 2003, p. 504).

Gleeson and Husbands (2003, p. 505) see two key policy assumptions regarding 'the relationship between performance management policies and school-level management'. These two key assumptions are about a technical view of teaching that delivers predetermined outcomes. Teachers and school leaders are redirected to:

> focus on the short-term and measurable, the system as a whole has been realigned around new managerial assumptions. … Both assumptions derive from a reading of the influence of the New Right …. Performance management becomes an inspection and compliance framework by other routes, in which the delivery/technician model of teaching and school management is trained by deployed in different directions. We have already seen that performance management frameworks are dependent upon policy prescriptions of the intended

> outcomes of teaching: in this respect they make assumptions about the purposes of schooling … this narrow focus is open to systematic doubt. Critiques of performance management cut its capacity to deprofessionalize and de-skill teachers in a search for models of technical effectiveness is a persistent feature. … programmes based on the functional analysis of work roles are likely to produce teachers who are judged competent but are ill-equipped for further professional development, uncritical of education change and largely ignorant of the wider cultural, social, and political context. (Gleeson and Husbands, pp. 505-506).

In Australia, Perry and McWilliam (2007, p. 32) have observed that, in the current policy milieu, 'schools must be seen to perform, and to perform in ways that are measurable and thus are rendered visible to all'. Perry and McWilliam (2007) argue that converting almost everything to what is quantitative or measurable is to the detriment of the activities of teaching and learning that are qualitative and not highly visible such as the social, aesthetic, cultural, moral, spiritual, intellectual, innovative, and creative aspects of students' development. Under this performance rubric, students are reduced to a number such as a tertiary entrance score, and teachers focus on preparing students for standardised tests to the exclusion of these other educational objectives. Such a performance focus is counterproductive as it can erode the trust that is essential not only for the teaching profession but also for any accountability system (Perry and McWilliam, 2007. Also see Gleeson and Husbands, 2003).

In summary, during the period of the Howard Government in Australia, the professionalism of teachers was under attack. That a performance pay scheme was not implemented could indicate recognition that higher pay is not necessarily a motivating factor for teachers. Federalism also played a factor in the mitigation of the federal government's scheme because it represented an attempt by the federal government to intervene in what are traditionally state government responsibilities in Australia. Nonetheless, all state governments have pursued school-based management to some

degree. The development of a national curriculum is well advanced, as is the use of standardised testing. It is important for the professionalism of teachers to be continually reasserted and the values of the public domain be stressed. An emphasis on these values is critical to counter the effects of the third component of the democratic deficit.

The hollow school?

The way in which state and federal governments in Australia have sought to marketise the school system could be seen as an example of the third component of the democratic deficit. Rather than clarifying accountability lines, those who implement managerial and market practices into the public sector remove public goods and services from that sector and reduce citizens to customers. Ball (2009) has argued that, in the United Kingdom, education policy itself has, to some extent, been privatised.

Blackmore (2004) makes the link between the marketisation of schools and the democratic deficit clear when she argues that:

> The language of the market and new managerialism positioned teachers as education providers, parents as clients and students as consumers. … Notions of professional judgement were put under stress by increased parental surveillance and increasingly prescriptive curriculum and assessment with the introduction of standardized assessment of literacy and numeracy in years 3 and 5. Finally, the new managerialism changed the social and political relations of work, with increased executive prerogative with the principal, increased competition within schools between teachers with performance management, reduced funding creating internal tensions between units, and increased reporting, monitoring, and surveillance under new regimes of managerial accountability (Blackmore, 2004, p. 273).

Similarly, in the United Kingdom, school-based management has distanced headteachers from students and classroom learning, undermining them as educational leaders (McInerney, 2003).

In a recent article on education policy in the United Kingdom, Ball (2009) argues that education and education policy have, in effect, been privatised. Privatisation has occurred in a number of ways. The first of these is the selling of continuing professional development, consultancies, training, and support directly to schools and universities. Here policy is being sold 'as a retail commodity' by private providers (Ball, 2009, p. 84). In the United Kingdom, these providers can make a profit in at least two ways. The first relates to government policies on underperformance such that these businesses sell school improvement. The second relates to 'policy ideas, like "personalised learning"' (Ball, 2009, p. 85). Similar changes have been occurring in the United States and amount to '"reculturing"' (Fullan, 2001, in Ball, 2009, p. 86) in line with 'business models of *change management*' (Ball, 2009, p. 85. Emphasis in original) that involve managerial language and a self-belief.

The second method of educational privatisation is 'the privatisation of policy' (Ball, 2009, p. 88):

> where private education consultants produce policy 'texts' and policy ideas *for* and *within* the state; the export of 'statework' to private providers and 'agencies'; and the formulation and dissemination of new policy discourses arising out of the participation of these companies in report writing, evaluation, advice, consultancy and recommendations. In other words, the representatives of the private sector operate inside of government and are part of the 'policy creation community' (Ball, 2009, p. 89).

Thus education and consultancy businesses are now embedded in the networks of policy making and policy delivery. Ball (2009) uses PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP to illustrate his points.

The third aspect of the privatisation of education is related to globalisation and new markets. Examples here are Cambridge Education in the United States and Edison Schools UK in the United Kingdom. Here these schools/school districts sell services to other schools, districts, or countries.[5] Ball (2009, p. 95) argues that 'these kinds of activities entail both "policy entrepreneurship" *and at the same time* a process of policy transfer, and perhaps a mechanisms of "policy convergence". The companies are delivering "development and aid policy" (for a potential profit), developing local policy infrastructures, and embedding prevailing western policy discourses, directly or as "spillovers" into the local policy systems, working with various "partners"' (Ball, 2009, p. 95). This activity is, in essence, 'a form of re-colonisation' (Ball, 2009, p. 95).

All three of these areas of privatisation amount to a re-drawing of the boundaries between the public sector and the private sector (Ball, 2009). Yet, education, like many other areas of the public sector, involves multiple and competing objectives. Managerial and market practices, then, 'cannot be applied in a simple manner to education' (Santizo Rodall and Martin, 2009, p. 328) as they are narrow and because the political is crucial to the public domain (Santizo Rodall and Martin, 2009).

[5] For instance, Cambridge Education trains Beijing education inspectors. It works with governments in Thailand, California, New Orleans, and New York, as well as with the World Bank.

Continuing his work about the public domain, Ranson (2003) has mounted a strong case against the accountability and 'performativity' components of managerialism. Ranson (2003) argues that accountability in the public domain should contain a number of features, beginning with recognition that:

> corporate/contract accountability is inappropriate to the public sphere. The goods of effectiveness need to be subordinated to the internal goods of a service that can only be clarified through deliberation in the public sphere. …[There is a need to] reconstruct the governance of accountability as a democratic practice … [because] the public sphere is inescapably a political space because it is the space of collectivity … [thus] an alternative perspective of accountability begins by recognising this agonistic plurality and contestation at the centre of the public sphere (Ranson, 2003, p. 473).

By implication, membership of the public domain is inclusive. Thus participation, equality of voice, dissent, and deliberation in order to reach a shared understanding are all important in the democratic public domain. Other features of this type of accountability are judgement and collective choice. Within a democratic system, deliberation leads to judgement and collective choice, which, in turn, leads to popular control and, hopefully, to the democratisation of social relations (Ranson, 2003). As Ranson (2003, p. 475) argues:

> accountability is a defining quality of the public sphere because it institutionalizes a discourse about purposes, practices, and performance. "It is a social and political process". … Public accountability articulates a theory of political authority grounded in the consent of society. That authority resides with the public and is delegated to representatives and officials on condition that they, in turn, account to the public.

Thus public accountability is about values such as inclusion and social justice. These values mean that it is essential that 'the outcomes of schooling' be 'broaden' (Mulford *et al.*, 2008, p. 24) such that students' 'democratic knowledge, attitudes, values, and actions' are valued and assessed (Mulford, *et al.*, 2008, p. 41). The current managerial

regime has eroded trust and, ironically, distorted performance (Ranson, 2003). According to Ranson (2003, p. 476), communities need to 'learn to recognize that their identities and futures depend…on committing themselves to the internal goods of improvement embedded in the institutional practices of democratic citizenship and governance'.

While changes to the education system in Australia have, perhaps, not gone as far as those in the United Kingdom — and possibly for similar reasons as they did not go as far in the core public service in the 1990s where there was a stated belief in democratic principles — nevertheless, there has been a significant attempt to marketise schooling. Marketisation forces public schools into competition with each other, as well as with private schools. This drift was aided by the funding policies of the Howard federal government, which gave more support to Catholic and Independent schools, and intervened in state government responsibilities. Marketisation is most obvious in the policies surrounding school choice. Any move that recasts parents and children as the consumers of school suffers from a similar problem. Not every parent has the resources to choose.

Marketisation is also apparent in the use of League Tables that have the potential to give a false impression of the schools that appear to be performing well and the schools that appear to be performing poorly (e.g., Smeed *et al.,* 2009). This aspect of marketisation links back to the first component of the democratic deficit as these League Tables and the standardised tests that drive them are a means of ensuring the accountability of teachers. Yet such tests and League Tables might only produce student performance and teacher accountability related to completing tests on a

narrow range of tasks than on the full range of tasks and attributes required of citizens. Thus it is likely that schools will no longer be free, secular, and compulsory (Meadmore, 2001). Hence there has been a move to the third component of the democratic deficit in Australia, where critics have observed the privatisation of education. A privatised school is, in essence, a hollow school — education policy, practices, curriculum, and pedagogy are no longer the preserve of the state but are provided by private companies seeking to make a profit rather than seeking to develop the citizens of the future.

Implications and Conclusion

We have argued there has been a drift towards a democratic deficit in Australian schooling. First, through the use of school-based management, there has been a greater stress on a narrow view of accountability, at the expense of broader notions of accountability. Second, there has been consideration of performance pay and a greater use of performance measures in schools. These performance measures de-professionalise teachers. Third, although not as extensive as in the United Kingdom, the direction of federal funding, the marketisation of schools, and the publication of League Tables, mark a trend to the third component of the democratic deficit.

We concur with Mulford *et al*. (2008, p. 25) who observe that '[m]aintaining a model of accountability that is built on a restricted view of what is essential and how that is determined helps to perpetuate school inequality and social inequality'. A way forward suggested by Ranson is to reassert and reclaim the values of the public domain, particularly those of democratic citizenship, inclusion and social justice, in order to counter the impact of this deficit. For instance, it could be argued that

governments need to invest in ‘more trust in the teaching profession’ (Gleeson and Husbands, 2003, p.507). They need to ‘retrieve’ the ‘public domain that holds in check the incursions of the market … School development, teacher development, and teacher effectiveness depend on the exercise of imagination, on rigorous self-evaluation and the involvement of the whole community’ (Gleeson and Husbands, 2003, p. 509).

Hargreaves (2000, pp. 169-175) has offered seven suggestions for teachers and school leaders to maintain and reassert their professionalism. The first suggestion, competitive salaries for all teachers, is perhaps one that no-one would dispute. But there appears, at least in Australia, to be a lack of will at the government level to pursue this proposal (Hargreaves, 2000).

Second, counter the derision and blaming of teachers in which politicians and the media engage (Hargreaves, 2000). A culture of blame has caused a loss of faith by the public in teachers and education. Third, regulate those entering into the educational work of schools. Fourth, value and defend the ‘rigorous knowledge’ that comes with their education as teachers. Fifth, teachers must collaborate to improve ‘teaching, learning and caring in schools’. Sixth, teachers need to mount a convincing case for why they need time during the school day to collaborate. Seventh, ‘teachers must direct their collaborative efforts towards positive change not only within their own schools, but also with their colleagues elsewhere … [teachers need] to *set and meet an exacting set of professional standards of practice*’ (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 171, Italics in the original).

A final suggestion we would proffer is one that looks beyond contractual accountability towards more responsive approaches where teachers and leaders are central to decisions about making their schools successful so that a range of student interests and needs can be met (Mulford *et al,* 2008). The notion of accountability would be broadened so that teaching is not preoccupied with narrow tests scores of students but takes a wider perspective to 'include evidence of student social success and empowerment' (Print in Mulford *et al*., 2008, p.40). Such an approach recognises the moral purpose of teaching and education since students' needs and interests would be driving school-based reforms. It also recognises that teachers and principals in concert can endeavour to 'counter the excesses of managerialism and reassert their capacities to improve [their schools and] … themselves' (Johnson, 2004, p.23).

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